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Personnel

AIR FORCE MENTORING

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This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 36-34, *Air Force Mentoring Program*. It provides guidance on how to carry out the Air Force Mentoring Program, which was established to bring about a cultural change in the way we view professional development for company grade officers. Mentoring is an essential ingredient in developing well-rounded, professional, and competent future leaders. The goal of this instruction is to help each officer reach their full potential as officers, thereby enhancing the overall professionalism of the officer corps. It applies to all commanders and supervisors/raters of Air Force company grade officers. See **Attachment 1** for a glossary of references, abbreviations, and acronyms.

1. Definition. A mentor is defined as “a trusted counselor or guide.” Mentoring, therefore, is a relationship in which a person with greater experience and wisdom guides another person to develop both personally and professionally.

2. Scope. Mentoring company grade officers helps prepare them for the increased responsibilities they will assume during their careers. Mentoring is not a promotion enhancement program. Mentoring is an ongoing process and not confined to formal feedback required by AFI 36-2402, *Officer Evaluation System*. It is a professional development program designed to help each individual reach his or her maximum potential. Professional development is not a new concept. It occurs at every echelon and activity. Mentors must always remain aware of their responsibility to maintain professional relationships with junior personnel. AFI 36-2909, *Professional and Unprofessional Relationships*, sets forth the rules regarding maintenance of professional relationships. In particular, mentoring is part of a professional relationship because it fosters free communication by subordinates with superiors concerning their careers, performance, duties and missions. It enhances morale and discipline and improves the operational environment while maintaining respect for authority.

2.1. Air Force mentoring covers a wide range of areas, such as career guidance, technical and professional development, leadership, Air Force history and heritage, air and space power doctrine, strategic vision, and contribution to joint warfighting. It also includes knowledge of the ethics of our military profession and understanding of the Air Force's core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do.

2.2. Commanders and supervisors must encourage subordinates to read and comprehend air and space power literature such as Air Force doctrine and operational warfighting publications and the books and journals in the CSAF Professional Reading Program. See **Attachment 2** for a list of the books in the CSAF Professional Reading Program. Suggested reading lists from each of the officer PME schools are also good sources for professional readings.

3. Assignment of Mentors. Commanders are responsible for promoting a robust mentoring program within their unit. The immediate supervisor or rater is designated as the primary mentor (coach, guide, role model, etc.) for each of his or her subordinates. This designation in no way restricts the subordinate's desire to seek additional counseling and professional development advice from other sources or mentors.

3.1. Key to the mentoring process is the direct involvement of the commander and supervisor in the professional development of his or her people. Commanders and supervisors must continually challenge their subordinates. It is essential to provide clear performance feedback and guidance in setting realistic professional and personal development goals -- near, mid- and long-term.

3.2. Several programs exist to help the commander and supervisor focus attention on a subordinate's professional development. Among these are performance feedback, professional military education (PME) programs, academic education opportunities, assignment policies, recognition programs, and the individual's own personal development actions. Additionally, there are many organizations, programs, and associations dedicated to the advancement and education of military professionals. Organizations may wish to contact those programs and groups for speakers, implement program chapters on their bases, or use their resources to develop mentoring programs. See **Attachment 3** for a list of such organizations.

4. Mentoring Responsibilities. Mentoring is a fundamental responsibility of all Air Force officers and civilian employees supervising officers. They must know their people, accept personal responsibility for them, and be accountable for their professional development.

4.1. Raters will discuss performance, potential, and professional development plans with their subordinates during performance feedback sessions, as required by AFI 36-2402.

4.2. When mentoring subordinates on career development, raters should carefully study the applicable Air Force specialty career path pyramid and career experience matrix found in AFPAM 36-2630, *Officer Professional Development Guide*. Pay particular attention to assignment and job levels as they apply to company grade through more senior field grades. Also, note the technical expertise key on each career experience matrix to determine what leadership opportunities and staff experience are considered mandatory, essential, desired, or optional. Functional managers are responsible for ensuring that technical mentoring within their career field is available and raters should ensure their officers have continuous access to career-field unique mentoring and expertise.

4.3. It is important for mentors to distinguish between individual goals, career aspirations, and realistic expectations. Each individual defines a successful career differently--there are numerous paths to meet individual career and success goals. First and foremost, however, officers must stay focused on our institutional needs: We must develop people who are skilled in the employment and support of air

and space power and how it meets the security needs of the nation. While there is nothing wrong with lofty goals, mentors must ensure their people realize how attainable--or how ambitious--their goals are.

5. PME and Academic Education. PME and academic education enhance performance in each phase of professional development and build on a foundation of supervisory and leadership abilities shown during the earlier stages of an individual's career. The appropriate role of PME in professional development is to prepare officers to take on increased responsibilities appropriate to their grade and to enhance their contribution to the Air Force.

5.1. The focus for officers should be on developing the skills they need to enhance their professional competence and to become superior leaders while expanding their knowledge of the operational employment of air and space power. This is the primary focus of Air Force PME. See AFI 36-2301, *Professional Military Education*, for officer PME information and requirements.

5.2. Master's degrees or other advanced academic degrees are important to professional development to the extent they enhance the degree holder's job and professional qualifications. A degree directly related to the individual's primary specialty area is the most appropriate because it adds to the depth of experience. In some career fields, advanced formal education is a prerequisite for certain jobs. A master's or advanced degree in management or more general studies would tend to enhance job performance for personnel reaching grade levels where breadth of development begins to take place.

6. Professional Associations. There are many private organizations that seek to develop professional skills and associations for individuals in many career fields and technical specialties. Membership in such associations may provide additional opportunities for mentoring as well as broadening technical expertise.

7. Evaluation and Performance Feedback. Air Force evaluation systems are designed to accurately appraise performance. Substantive, formal feedback is essential to the effectiveness of the evaluation systems. Performance evaluation systems are an integral part of mentoring and professional development. Performance feedback is designed to provide a realistic assessment of performance, career standing, future potential, and actions required to assist the ratee in reaching the next level of professional development. Additional information on the evaluation system is available in AFI 36-2402 and AFPAM 36-2404, *Guide to USAF Officer Evaluation System*.

8. Promotion Selection. Commissioned officers are selected for promotion by central selection boards which evaluate records, using the "whole person" concept. Factors included in the "whole person" assessment are job performance, level of assignments, professional competence, breadth and depth of experience, job responsibility, PME, and specific achievements (awards, decorations, and special recognition). Additional information is available in AFPM 36-25, *Military Promotion and Demotion*.

8.1. Mentors should ensure that officers don't view a successful career solely in terms of promotion success. They should understand that they will have had a successful career if they make lieutenant colonel. Labeling success as a senior grade has several serious drawbacks, among them careerist thinking and a mindset that not making a specific grade represents a failed career. The reality is that not everyone progresses to the next level. For example, for every 100 officers who enter active duty, 45 will be promoted to major, 30 to lieutenant colonel, and only 8 to colonel. Mentors should ensure their officers understand how their promotion system works.

9. The Military Assignment System. The focus of the mentor's and individual's efforts should be toward obtaining an assignment that enhances professional development while meeting Air Force needs without necessarily keying on a specific position or location.

9.1. The individual's primary focus should be on doing well in his or her current assignment. When an individual becomes eligible for reassignment, he or she should then address assignment preferences with the supervisor.

9.2. AFI 36-2110 governs assignment of military personnel. Assignments should complement the individual's professional development needs and be second only to mission requirements. However, the needs of the service may dictate that officers take assignments that are not necessarily consistent with planned career paths.

9.3. For officer professional development assignments, see AFPAM 36-2630 for career path guides. This pamphlet also provides requirements and expectations in a subordinate's particular career specialty. As necessary, supervisors should consult career field/functional managers to refine the match of subordinates with appropriate jobs.

10. Recognition, Awards, and Decorations. All military members are eligible for consideration for a military decoration throughout their career, but recommendations should not be submitted just to "do something for your people." Restrict recommendations to recognition of meritorious service, outstanding achievement, etc., which clearly places the individual above his or her peers.

10.1. AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program*, provides eligibility and processing instructions for military personnel.

10.2. AFI 36-2805, *Special Trophies and Awards*, describes recognition sponsored by the US Air Force and private organizations that seek Air Force participation. It applies to all active duty Air Force members paid through appropriated funds.

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Attachment 1

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

References

AFPD 36-25, *Military Promotion and Demotion*
AFPD 36-34, *Air Force Mentoring Program*
AFPD 90-5, *Quality Air Force*
AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*
AFI 36-2301, *Professional Military Education*
AFI 36-2402, *Officer Evaluation System*
AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program*
AFI 36-2805, *Special Trophies and Awards*
AFI 36-2909, *Professional and Unprofessional Relationships*
AFI 90-501, *Criteria For Air Force Assessments*
AFM 1-1, Volumes 1 and 2, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the US Air Force*
AFPAM 36-2404, *Guide to the USAF Officer Evaluation System*
AFPAM 36-2630, *Officer Professional Development Guide*
CSAF Professional Reading Program
Col Phillip S. Meilinger, *10 Propositions Regarding Air Power*
Col John Warden, *The Air Campaign*
Doctrine Videotape Series
Air Power Primer
Air Power Mentoring Guide
Global Engagement Vision Document
Global Engagement Warfighting Document
Joint Vision 2010
Professional Readings Lists for Air University
Air Force Internet Site (www.issues.af.mil)

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFCOMAP—Air Force Cadet/Officer Mentor Action Program
AFIP—Air Force Intern Program
CGOC—Company Grade Officer Council

LPDP—Lieutenant's Professional Development Program

PME—Professional Military Education

SOS—Squadron Officer School

Attachment 2

CHIEF OF STAFF PROFESSIONAL READING LIST

Basic List

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, William Morrow & Co.
Phillip Meilinger, *10 Propositions*, Air Force History and Museums
James Stokesbury, *A Short History of Air Power*, William Morrow & Co.
Donald Phillips, *Lincoln on Leadership*, Warner Books
Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff*, Bantam Books
James Hudson, *Hostile Skies*, Syracuse University Press
DeWitt Copp, *A Few Great Captains*, Air Force Historical Foundation
Geoffrey Perret, *Winged Victory*, Random House
John Sherwood, *Officers in Flight Suits*, NYU Press
T.R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*, Brassey's
Jack Broughton, *Thud Ridge*, Imagination Transportation, Inc.
Harold Moore, *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*, Harper Collins
Richard Reynolds, *Heart of the Storm*, Air University Press

Intermediate List

Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Princeton University Press
Tony Mason, *Air Power: A Centennial Appraisal*, Brassey's
George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, Air Force History and Museums
Donald Slayton, *Deke!*, Forge Books
Lee Kennett, *The First Air War*, Free Press
Thomas Hughes, *Over Lord*, Free Press
Frank Futrell, *USAF in Korea*, Air Force History and Museums
Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Airpower*, Free Press
Richard Hallion, *Storm Over Iraq*, Smithsonian Institution Press

Advanced List

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Princeton University Press
I.B. Holley, *Ideas and Weapons*, Air Force History and Museums
James Belasco and Ralph Stayer, *Flight of the Buffalo*, Warner Books
Walter McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth*, TBD
Ray Fredette, *The Sky on Fire*, Smithsonian Institution Press

R. J. Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, Norton

Phillip Meilinger, *Hoyt Vandenberg*, Indiana University Press

Ulysses Sharp, *Strategy For Defeat*, Presidio Press

James Winnefeld and Dana Johnson, *Joint Air Operations*, Naval Institute Press

Roger Beaumont, *Joint Military Operations*, Greenwood

Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The Generals' War*, Little Brown & Company

John Warden, *The Air Campaign*, TBD

Professional Journals to be read by officers of all grades

Airpower Journal

Attachment 3

THE MENTORING TOOLBOX

NOTE: There are several “tools” that can be used to facilitate mentoring for company grade officers. The following is a list of organizations, associations, and programs that support various segments of the military population. This list is not all-inclusive, is provided for information only, and should not be considered an endorsement of their activities by the US Air Force.

A3.1. National Organizations for Certification and Licensing. The base education center has a list of nationally recognized organizations who authorize licensing and certification programs, to include who is eligible to apply.

A3.2. Company Grade Officer Council (CGOC). This organization is active in helping the base and local community. It is normally active at each base under guidance from the host command.

A3.3. Air Force Intern Program (AFIP), HQ USAF/DPPE, 1040 Pentagon, Washington, DC 20330-1040. Gives future leaders early Pentagon experience.

A3.4. Lieutenant’s Professional Development Program (LPDP). This program fills the professional development gap between commissioning and Squadron Officer School. Normally active under guidance from the base’s host command.

A3.5. The Order of Daedalians and the Airlift/Tanker Association. Professional associations of military pilots.

A3.6. The Air Force Association (AFA), 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209. Founded in 1946 to support air power and a strong national defense. Lobbies on all Air Force-related issues.

A3.7. The Association of Military Surgeons of the US, 9320 Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda, MD 20814. Founded in 1891 to represent physicians and other health care workers of commissioned rank. Mainly a professional development group.

A3.8. Military Chaplains Association of the USA, P.O. Box 42660, Washington DC 20015. Founded in 1925 for Army chaplains. Chartered by Congress in 1950 to represent the interests of all military chaplains. Lobbies Congress on pay, benefits, and preservation of the chaplain corps.

A3.9. The National Association of Uniformed Services (NAUS), 5535 Hempstead Way, Springfield, VA 22151. Founded in 1968 to represent anyone who wears (or has worn) a uniform. Lobbies for an array of pay and benefits.

A3.10. The Retired Officers Association (TROA), 201 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Founded in 1919 to represent retired officers. Focuses on pay and benefits issues.

A3.11. Air Force Cadet/Officer Mentor Action Program, Inc. (AFCOMAP), P.O. Box 47015, Washington, DC 20050. A private organization founded in 1982. Chartered by SAF and CSAF. Committed to supporting the Air Force in the recruitment, professional development, and retention of cadets and junior officers. Originally founded for minority officers, but open to all.

A3.12. Air University Library, 600 Chennault Circle, Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6424. Houses well-balanced collections especially strong in the fields of war fighting, aeronautics, Air Force and DoD operations, military sciences, education, leadership, and management.

A3.13. Civil Air Patrol (CAP), 105 South Hansell St., Bldg 714, Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6332. The volunteer civilian auxiliary of the Air Force. CAP performs emergency service missions to include air and ground search and rescue, disaster relief, and drug interdiction. It promotes citizenship, leadership, physical fitness, and aerospace education through its cadet programs.

A3.14. National Guard Association of the US (NGAUS), 1 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001. Represent officers in the National Guard and Air National Guard. Focuses on National Guard issues.

A3.15. Reserve Officers Association (ROA), 1 Constitution Ave, NE, Washington, DC 20002. Founded in 1950 to represent reserve officers. Focuses on reserve issues.

A3.16. AF Reserve's Junior Officer Leadership Development Seminar. Offers different professional development programs at diverse locations across the US at varied times. Open to active duty members.